

Report of: Director of Corporate Resources

Meeting of	Date	Agenda Item	Ward(s)
Corporate Services	27 Sept 2007	B1	All

Delete as appropriate	Exempt	Non-exempt

Subject: REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES

1. Synopsis

- 1.1 This report sets out proposed changes to a number of polling places and districts as part of a review carried out as required by Electoral Administration Act 2006.
- 1.2 The proposals have taken account of the representations received from the political groups and tried to ensure that there is a balance of the electorate within each polling district, that polling places are convenient and easily accessible for voters and that future demand arising from new building and development has also been taken into account.
- 1.3 These changes will take effect with the publication of the new Register on 1st December 2007. If an election were to be called between now and the end of November 2007, the existing polling districts and places would be used.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the polling districts and places remain unchanged for the following wards:

Highbury East
Junction
Mildmay
St. George's
Tollington
Bunhill
Caledonian
Clerkenwell

St. Mary's (subject to review when St. Mary Magdalene Academy available for Assessment)

2.2 That the changes to the polling places and districts set out in paragraph 3.10 be agreed.

3. Background

Introduction

- 3.1 The Electoral Administration Act 2006 introduced a number of changes to the Representation of the People Act (RPA) 1983 in respect of the way in which reviews of polling districts and polling places must be undertaken.
- 3.2 By 31st December 2007 every relevant authority must have undertaken and completed a review of all of the polling districts and polling places in its area. A review must then be carried out every four years thereafter.
- 3.3 A briefing meeting on the Electoral Administration Act 2006 was held for Members and political parties and election agents on 28th March 2007. There is a good turnaround to this meeting where participants were able to ask questions on the main changes set out in the Act.

Notice of Holding of a Review

- 3.4 On 1st May 2007 a Notice of the Holding of a Review of polling places and districts was published in the Islington Gazette and on the Council's website. All Councillors, local major political parties and local disability groups were written to to explain the process and invite representations.
- 3.5 Following these representations, a draft report was produced setting out proposals for discussion and changes to various polling places and districts. This was discussed at a meeting with representatives from both political groups on the 10th September 2007 and the proposals set out in this report are the result of that meeting and the various representations received.

Representations

- 3.6 These were received from:
 - a) Islington Labour Group
 - b) Islington Liberal Democrat Group
 - c) Cllr James Kempton, Leader of the Council
 - d) Cllr Lucy Watt, Deputy Leader of the Council

These are set out in Appendix A.

- 3.7 Staff from Electoral Services visited every single polling place and district over the summer and looked at both existing and potential places.
- 3.8 The aim was to see if there were suitable alternative sites where there were difficulties with existing sites; try to create a balance of allocations within each district; take into account the

distance electors have to walk to polling places and avoid where possible crossing of major roads. Finally, where possible, to avoid major upheaval and change for residents.

3.9 The proposals set out overleaf are as a result of these visits, representations received and discussions with Councillors from both the Labour and Liberal Democrat Groups.

3.10 A summary of the recommended changes is set out below. This is followed by more detailed information on wards where changes are proposed.

Recommended Changes

Finsbury Park

Polling District	Proposed Polling Place	Electorate
NFPA	Pakeman School	2102
NFPB	Bennett Court Tenants Hall	2026
NFPC	Andover Estate Community Hall	1723
NFPD	Poole's Park School	1977

- Substantial change creating a fourth polling district and affecting a significant number of the electorate. Will be beneficial to the voters and give stability for next few years.

Highbury West

Polling District	Proposed Polling Place	Electorate
NHWA	St. Thomas' Church Hall	2937
NHWA	Hind House Community Room	2478
NHWC	St. John's Highbury Vale School	3265

- A very minor change to incorporate half of Conewood Street into C district to enable an additional 23 electors to vote at the school on their street.

Hillrise

Polling District	Proposed Polling Place	Electorate
NHRA	Hornsey Lane Estate Community Centre	1849
NHRB	Caxton House	3246
NHRC	St. Mary's Church	2401

- Creating a new polling place and reducing the size of the polling district served by it to address some of the difficulties caused by the geographical nature of the area.

Barnsbury

Polling District	Proposed Polling Place	Electorate
SBAA	Samuel Rhodes School	2461
SBAB	Thornhill Primary School	2914
SBAC	Half Moon Crescent Community Hall	2534

- Proposes moving streets at the north of SBAC into SBAA resulting in better spread of electorate and enabling effected electors to vote at more local polling place

Canonbury

Polling District	Proposed Polling Place	Electorate
SCNA	Walter Sickert Community Centre	3101
SCNB	Almorah Community Centre	2190
SCNC	New River Green Early Years Centre	2508

- Will enable more electors to vote at polling stations within their polling districts and will better equalise the electorate numbers but introduces a new polling place.

Holloway

Polling District	Proposed Polling Place	Electorate
SHYA	Lorraine Estate Community Hall	2946
SHYB	Goodinge Community Centre	2999
SHYC	Sacred Heart R/C Primary School	2358

- Proposes a change of polling place to district A to a more visible polling place that previously served this electorate, albeit at the edge of the polling district.

St. Peter's

Polling District	Proposed Polling Place	Electorate
SSPA	New North Community School	2795
SSPB	St James' Hall	2030
SSPC	Hanover School	3088

- Proposes the new school at district A, which is on the site of the old polling place and is an excellent building well placed within the district.
- Proposes moving 230 electors from Cluse Court and Baldwin Terrace into the adjoining district to enable access to a nearer polling place.

Background on Individual Changes

Finsbury Park Ward

The following is a table of the existing polling arrangements for Finsbury Park Ward.

Polling District	Current Polling Place	Electorate	Properties	Polling Stations
NFPA	Pakeman School Pakeman Street, N7	2274	1949	2
NFPB	Bennett Court Tenants Hall Axminster Road, N7	2867	2035	2
NFPC	Montem School, Hornsey Road, N7	2743	2033	2

Current Problems

District A currently has no polling place within its boundaries and Pakeman School which is the designated polling place is actually in polling district B. The polling station is some distance from many of the electors in the north east section of the polling district who have a considerable walk and have to cross both Seven Sisters Road and Hornsey Road to reach their polling station.

District B polling place is Bennett Court Tenants Hall which whilst central within the district and accessible is not ideal as a polling place as it would benefit from some updating and maintenance. However, overall it would still be satisfactory for polling to continue at this venue. The other difficulty here is that the polling district is split by the natural boundary of Seven Sisters Road. Those on the south side of Seven Sisters Road are unable to vote at Pakeman School which is situated within their streets but in fact serves another district.

District C polling place is Montem School and whilst it is suitable from an access perspective is situated at the edge of the polling district and the Head Teacher is not keen on the school being used.

Proposals

It is proposed to create 4 polling districts. Although this breaks from the usual practice of having 3 polling districts it is considered that this is the most satisfactory solution in this area.

NFPA – would run with the boundary down the middle of Seven Sisters Road from Holloway Road to Finsbury Park and consist of all residents to the South of this. We would suggest Pakeman School be the designated polling place. This would mean the electors who would vote at this place would be either those from existing district A plus those from previous district B who are south of Seven Sisters Road.

NFPB – Would consist of the remainder of polling district B. This would include those north of Seven Sisters Road and west of Hornsey Road. They could continue to vote at Bennett Court Tenants Hall.

NFPC – This polling district boundary would run through the middle of Hornsey Road turning east at the top of the ward to Durham Road and run through the middle of Durham Road down to Seven Sisters Road, where it would turn west and end at Hornsey Road making a rough square. We would propose that a new polling place be used.

This would be the Andover Estate Community Centre in Corker Walk which meets all the suitability and access criteria. It is central to the community and is well known. This could help increase turnout in the Andover Estate. The staff there were very happy for it to be used. However, Montem School could still be used if necessary.

NFPD – would run to the east of Durham Road down to Seven Sisters in the south and to the edge of the ward in the north and east. This could be served by Poole’s Park School and would be entirely suitable for polling. It has been used previously and the school are happy for it to be used. This would mean voters from the Six Acres estate would have a much closer polling station to vote at and this would hopefully see turnout increase.

Wherever possible polling stations should remain the same as the continuity reduces voter confusion and aids turnout. However, we strongly believe that these redrawn boundaries will be for the benefit of the electorate and that this scheme would remain stable for the next few years. Other than the usual notification of changes to polling stations that we would plan to undertake anyway, there could be a particular information drive in this area to ensure that all residents are aware of the changes.

Polling District	Proposed Polling Place	Electorate
NFPA	Pakeman School	2102
NFPB	Bennett Court Tenants Hall	2026
NFPC	Andover Estate Community Hall	1723
NFPD	Poole’s Park School	1977

N.B. A new development at the site of Hornsey Road baths will be within NFPC and will easily be absorbed into this polling district as it has a slightly lower electorate than the other three.

Highbury West Ward

Polling District	Current Polling Place	Electorate	Properties	Polling Stations
NHWA	St. Thomas’ Church Hall Monsell Road, N4	2960	1900	2

Whilst it meets the suitability and access checklist criteria it is quite small. A double station is required and whilst there is no viable alternative within the existing polling district or surrounding area it is recommended that it continue to be used until either the need to redraw the lines occurs

or a larger more suitable premises can be found. There are two local schools but council has previously preferred not to use these.

Polling District	Current Polling Place	Electorate	Properties	Polling Stations
NHWB	Hind House Community Room Harvist Estate, N7	2478	2092	1

This polling place is very small and whilst an electorate of this size would normally necessitate a double station these premises could not hold two stations. Therefore this station would require an extra poll clerk to ensure that they coped sufficiently well to maintain the good running of the poll. There is no other alternative building within the polling district or ward, so it is recommended that these premises continue to be the designated polling place for B polling district.

Polling District	Current Polling Place	Electorate	Properties	Polling Stations
NHWC	St. John's Highbury Vale School Conewood Street, N5	3242	2019	2

This polling place is outside of the polling district. It is recommended that the polling district line be moved north of Conewood Street to include both sides of the street. Thereby enabling those on the north side of the street to vote at the polling station on their street and bringing the polling place within the boundary of the polling district. Other than that this school continues to be a suitable polling place for this district.

Future of Highbury West Ward

There is considerable building works underway and planned within this ward particularly connected with the new and former sites of Arsenal Football Club. Currently, it would not be sensible to anticipate fully what the impact of these works will be upon the electorate. However, there is certainly not an abundance of suitable polling facilities as yet within this ward although perhaps the planned works may address this. In time it may be necessary to move to four polling districts to cope with the increased numbers and this will be kept under review.

Hillrise Ward

Polling District	Current Polling Place	Electorate	Properties	Polling Stations
NHRA	Caxton House 129 St. John's Way	2514	1619	2

This polling place is outside of the existing polling district boundary and is served by another polling place in the ward.

Polling District	Current Polling Place	Electorate	Properties	Polling Stations
NHRB	Caxton House 129 St. John's Way	2581	1854	2

This polling place is absolutely suitable to be used as a polling place and is well situated within this polling district and is known to the community. It is recommended that Caxton House continue to be used as the designated polling place for NHRB.

Polling District	Current Polling Place	Electorate	Properties	Polling Stations
NHRC	St. Mary's Church Hall Ashley Road, N19 3AD	2401	1629	2

The Polling Place has a slight access issue, which is resolved by a ramp that is delivered at election time. There have been no issues regarding the station and it is recommended for continued use.

Proposal for change to Hillrise Ward

It is recommended that the polling district lines are moved and a new polling place is designated for NHRA. It is proposed that Hornsey Lane Estate Community Centre be the designated polling place. This is an area of steep hills and this building is much better located within the community and should be less difficult for electors to reach. The current arrangement of voters voting outside of the district should not occur when we have suitable premises within the existing boundary. However, the southern part of the existing NHRA would not benefit from this change and we would therefore recommend that the boundary be redrawn so that these electors would be in NHRB and therefore continue to vote at Caxton House. The new electorate and details would therefore be:

Polling District	Proposed Polling Place	Electorate
NHRA	Hornsey Lane Estate Community Centre	1849
NHRB	Caxton House	3246
NHRC	St. Mary's Church	2401

Barnsbury Ward

Polling District	Current Polling Place	Electorate	Properties	Polling Stations
SBAA	Samuel Rhodes School Dowrey Street / Richmond Avenue, London N1 0LS	2028	1448	1

The school is positioned at the most northern edge of the polling district, with Dowrey Street accessed from Richmond Avenue. The polling district extends to Pentonville Road at its most southern edge. Although the school is not central to the polling district, it has been used for some considerable period and there have been no particular issues. A ramp is delivered to the school at election time to ensure level access throughout. It is recommended that Samuel Rhodes School continue to be used for the SBAA polling district.

Although the school is being relocated alongside new buildings in Moreland and Highbury Grove Schools, respectively, the building will continue to be available for use as a polling place until July 2009 and the school are happy for it to continue to be used as a polling place.

Polling District	Current Polling Place	Electorate	Properties	Polling Stations
SBAB	Thornhill Primary School Thornhill Road, London N1 1HX	2914	2036	2

This school has been a long-standing polling place in Islington and offers good facilities and disabled access and is well known by electors. It is recommended that Thornhill Primary School continue to be used for the SBAB polling district.

Polling District	Current Polling Place	Electorate	Properties	Polling Stations
SBAC	Half Moon Crescent Community Hall, 183 Wynford Road, N1 9TZ	2976	2062	2

This is a good size community hall surrounded by a housing estate and central to the polling district. It has level access and is well known to the local community. It is recommended that Half Moon Community Hall continue to be used for the SBAC polling district.

It is also recommended to include the streets at the north of polling district C into polling district A. This would better equalise the electorate and enable those effected streets to vote at a close polling place. The effect of this would be as follows:

Polling District	Proposed Polling Place	Electorate
SBAA	Samuel Rhodes School	2461
SBAB	Thornhill Primary School	2914
SBAC	Half Moon Crescent Community Hall	2534

Canonbury Ward

Polling District	Current Polling Place	Electorate	Properties	Polling Stations
SCNA	Walter Sickert Community Centre, Canonbury Crescent London, N1 2FB	3558	2583	2

The community centre is known within the community and has been used for several years. The only issue here is the size of the electorate within the polling district. However, it is recommended this community hall continue to be the designated polling place for the polling district.

Polling District	Current Polling Place	Electorate	Properties	Polling Stations
SCNB	New North Community School Ecclesbourne Road	2190	1655	2

This is the current polling place for the district but this site no longer exists.

Polling District	Current Polling Place	Electorate	Properties	Polling Stations
SCNC	Almorah Community Centre 58 Almorah Road London N1 3EU	2051	1515	2

This polling place is in polling district SCNB and therefore the electorate are currently voting outside of their polling district.

It is recommended that polling district A be split down the middle of Clephane Road and all roads east to join polling district C. This would deal with the overly large polling district A. The remaining polling district A would continue to vote at the Walter Sickert.

Polling District B would remain unchanged and the Almorah Community Centre could be the designated polling place, which would be within the district.

Polling District C would be larger to include those electors from A but would enable a new polling place to be used. This is the New River Early Years Centre and Family Project in Ramsey Walk. The premises meets the access and suitability checklist and it meets all required criteria. It may also be possible for us to use the premises whilst the nursery remained open. However, this would mean that those electors in the 'old' part of C district would need to cross Essex Road to reach their new polling place but it would be in the correct district and in most cases less distance than going to the Almorah as at present.

New Electorate would be:

Polling District	Current Polling Place	Electorate
SCNA	Walter Sickert Community Centre	3101
SCNB	Almorah Community Centre	2190
SCNC	New River Green Early Years Centre	2508

Holloway Ward

Polling District	Current Polling Place	Electorate	Properties	Polling Stations
SHYA	Lorraine Estate Community Hall Holloway Road N7	2946	2218	2

The polling district this serves is a diamond shape with Caledonian Road running through the middle. The Lorraine Estate Community Hall although on the edge of the polling district, is situated on Holloway Road and easily accessible. It is recommended that this Community Hall be used.

Polling District	Current Polling Place	Electorate	Properties	Polling Stations
SHYB	Goodinge Community Centre North Road London N7 9EB	2999	2228	2

This is a community centre with level access and good facilities. It is along standing polling station and known by the local community. This is particularly relevant, as there is currently a phased redevelopment of the Market Estate, which is due to be completed in 2010, which this polling place will serve. It is recommended that Goodinge Community Centre continue to be used for the SHYB polling district.

Polling District	Current Polling Place	Electorate	Properties	Polling Stations
SHYC	Sacred Heart RC Primary School Georges Road London N7 8JN	2358	2553	2

This primary school is situated in the centre of the polling district. The facilities are large enough to accommodate the rise in electorate and properties due to the new housing development in Hornsey Street and Eden Grove. This will now make this a two station place. The school has level access and is well situated. It is recommended that Sacred Heart R/C Primary School continue to be used for the SHYC polling district.

St Mary's Ward

Polling District	Current Polling Place	Electorate	Properties	Polling Stations
SSMA	Laycock Primary School Laycock Street, London N1 1SW	2409	1753	2

The ground floor hall usually used for polling is now being converted in classrooms. There is a play centre room, which can be used and is accessed from the same entrance on Laycock Street. This would give the same facilities the hall had to offer.

There may be an alternative with the opening of the St Mary Magdalene Academy, Liverpool Road which is still under construction. It is more central to the polling district and has the potential to be an excellent polling place in the future. However, at this stage it is not quite ready but this could change in the near future. Therefore for now it is recommended that Laycock Primary School continue to be used for the SSMA polling district but that the St Mary Magdalene Academy be assessed when it is ready and that if suitable the polling place be changed to this.

Polling District	Current Polling Place	Electorate	Properties	Polling Stations
SSMB	St Mary's Neighbourhood Centre St Mary's Church, Upper Street London N1 2TX	2948	2249	2

The centre is located next to St Mary's Church. It has level access and good facilities, although access from Upper Street is across some cobblestones. It is recommended that St Mary's Neighbourhood Centre continue to be used for the SSMB polling district.

Polling District	Current Polling Place	Electorate	Properties	Polling Stations
SSMC	William Tyndale School Sable Street, London N1 2AQ	2403	1754	2

The school is situated centrally in the polling district. It has level access and good facilities. There are planned works for the hall, but these should be done by next May. There is also a smaller alternative room on the school site, which could be used if works on the hall are not complete at an election. It is recommended that William Tyndale School continue to be used for the SSMC polling district.

St Peter's Ward

Polling District	Current Polling Place	Electorate	Properties	Polling Stations
SSPA	Rotherfield Junior School Rotherfield Street London N1 3EE	2795	2070	2

Previously Charles Lamb Primary School was used as the polling place for SSPA. This was changed to Rotherfield Junior School, Rotherfield Street in 2005 when Charles Lamb School was closed.

New North Community School, Popham Road has relocated to the new school built on the site of Charles Lamb School. It is well situated in the polling district. It has level access, excellent facilities and is happy to be used as a polling place. It is recommended that New North Community School, Popham Road be allocated as the polling place for the SSPA polling district.

Polling District	Current Polling Place	Electorate	Properties	Polling Stations
SSPB	St James' Hall 11 Prebend Street London N1 8PF	2262	1651	2

The hall has level access and good facilities and is situated well in the polling district. Having investigated the polling district this remains the most suitable polling place.

Polling District	Current Polling Place	Electorate	Properties	Polling Stations
SSPC	Hanover School Wharf Road/Noel Road London N1 8BD	2856	2066	2

Hanover School is situated on the east edge of the polling district. It runs parallel with the canal and so is below the level of the adjoining streets. It can be accessed from Noel Road by steps, but with no disabled access. It can also be accessed from Wharf Road by a large steep concrete ramp only. This is not ideal for disabled access unless in a car. Once on the premises the building has one step into the hall, but a temporary ramp is provided at elections.

Hanover School has been used because no viable alternative can be found in the polling district. Unfortunately this still seems to be the case. Concerns have been received from a disability group regarding this polling place. However, taking all things into consideration it would appear to be the only sensible location for polling at this juncture as it is still the best location overall for the whole electorate. It is recommended the continued use of this school as the polling place.

It is also suggested that the polling district boundary of SSPC be extended to include the 228 electors in Cluse Court who virtually overlook the polling place in SSPC but are currently unable to vote there. This would have the following effect on the electorate (and would also need to include electors in Baldwin Terrace).

Polling District	Current Polling Place	Electorate
SSPA	New North Community School	2795
SSPB	St James' Hall	2030
SSPC	Hanover School	3088

Whilst this does create unequal sized polling districts it is likely to increase turnout in Cluse Court.

4. Implications

4.1 Financial implications

The costs of the polling districts and polling places review will be met from within existing budgets.

4.2 Legal implications

4.2.1 Section 18B (4) of the RPA 1983 states that in conducting a review of polling places the authority must:

- a) seek to ensure that all the electors in the constituency have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances
- b) seek to ensure that so far as is reasonable and practicable, the polling places they are responsible for are accessible to all electors, including those who are disabled, and when considering the designation of a polling place, must have regard to the accessibility needs of disabled persons.

4.2.2 In addition the polling place for a polling district must be within the area of the district unless special circumstances make it desirable to designate an area either wholly or partly outside of the polling district.

4.2.3 Following each election officers also review the running of the election and specifically look at any issues that have arisen to do with polling places or polling districts.

4.3 Equality Impact Assessment

4.3.1 Electoral Services considered a review of all possible polling places and used a suitability and access checklist. This was drawn largely from the recommendations in Scope's Poll Report 4 published following the 2005 General Election. One checklist has been completed for each existing poll place and all proposed new polling places.

4.3.2 All polling staff receive equalities training as part of the induction for working on the election.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 The Electoral Administration Act 2006 requires all authorities to undertake a review of all the polling districts and polling places in its area by 31st December 2007.

5.2 The proposals have been part of the discussion between the political groups and take into account representations received and current and future demand within the various districts.

Final report clearance

Signed by

Director of Corporate Resources

Received by

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Date

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